"PARKS IN THE 1990s"

Parks Division

Alberta Recreation and Parks Department

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INTRODUCTION: "PARKS IN THE 1990s"

This document establishes the foundation upon which we will manage Alberta's Parks, Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Recreation Areas through the 1990s. **It replaces all previous Divisional statements of mission, objectives, principles, or values that were used in the Operations and Maintenance Division, the Design and Implementation Division, or the former Provincial Parks Division.** The information within establishes a foundation and philosophical base upon which Divisional policy, program direction, management plans and work plans will be developed and implemented.

A. Organization of Document

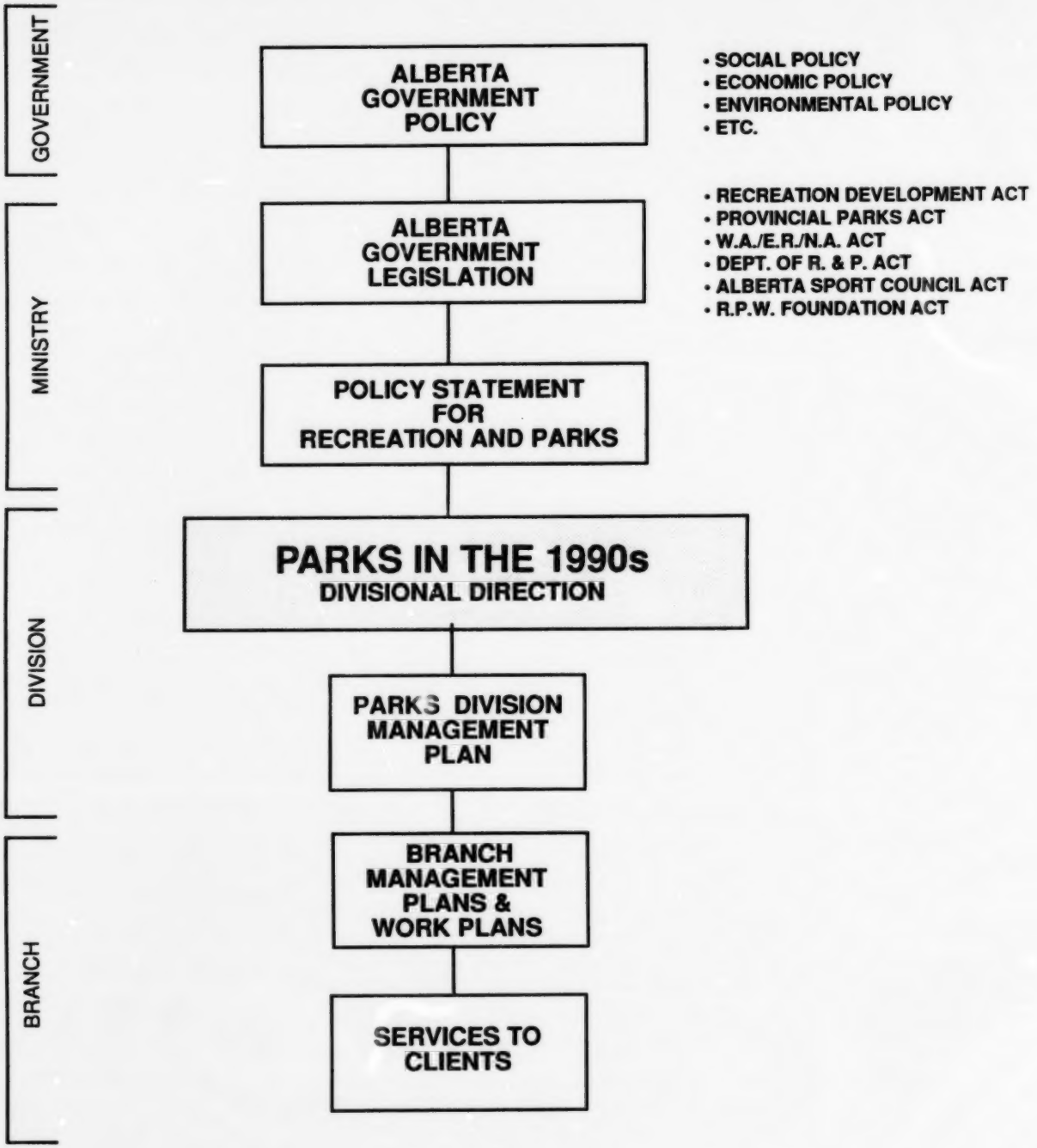
The document is divided into two sections. The first section is called "**Foundation for the 1990s**" and includes several graphic pages that describe our Divisional mission, objectives and principles. These are permanent references which provide a philosophical base for our endeavors in the 1990s.

The second section is called "**Management Direction**" and provides direction for organizational development and management and establishes specific divisional priorities to be accomplished.

B. Role of the Document

"**Parks in the 1990s**" provides a bridge from the broad long term direction of the Recreation and Parks Policy to the specific short term direction which will be included in Divisional management plans. Section 2 as outlined in the following policy framework diagram provides directive information that will be elaborated further in coming months.

Policy Framework



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SECTION 1: FOUNDATION FOR THE 1990S

This section describes a philosophical base for the Parks Division. It includes reference pages which describe the Division's mission, objectives and principles. These reference pages establish the basis for Divisional policy, management plans, budget strategies, projects, operational priorities and workplans.

Section 2: Foundations for the 1990s

1.1 Mission Statement

1.2 Divisional Objectives

1.3 Delivery & Management Principles

1.1 MISSION STATEMENT:

"Alberta's Provincial Park System:

Special natural places developed, maintained and preserved for public use and enjoyment."

This mission statement describes what service our Division provides to society. It is a deliberately concise statement, intended to focus us on the service we provide.

1.2 DIVISIONAL OBJECTIVES

These objectives direct the Division's business. They are organized into two groupings: **public service objectives and organizational objectives**. Both must be met in order to carry out our public mandate. The objectives direct the fulfillment of the Parks Division mandate established in government legislation, and directed by the department, through the Recreation and Parks Policy. **Public service** objectives direct the delivery of services, and **organizational** objectives direct the way the Division will be managed. These objectives reflect our responsibilities to society: to clients, to taxpayers, to the government, and to employees.

The Program objectives listed in the Recreation and Parks Policy will be accounted for within the Public Service Objectives. Heritage appreciation and tourism will be major parts of the delivery of Outdoor Recreation and Resource Protection.

The objectives direct the fulfillment of the Parks Division mandate established in government legislation and enunciated by the department, through the Recreation and Parks Policy.

Parks Division Objectives

Parks Division Mandate

Public Service Objectives
(what we do)

- Outdoor Recreation
- Resource Protection
- Interagency Coordination

Organizational Objectives
(how we do it)

- Management
- Financial
- Personnel

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Parks Division Objectives

Outdoor Recreation:

To develop and manage a system of lands, facilities and public services for the purposes of outdoor recreation.

Resource Protection:

To preserve manage and interpret a system of representative, special and outstanding natural landscapes and related cultural resources.

Interagency Coordination:

To foster interagency and private sector consultation on planning and delivery of outdoor recreation and conservation programs in Alberta.

Management:

To establish policy, objectives and priorities and to organize people and resources to achieve the outcomes therein.

Financial:

To ensure that budget and resources are allocated and expended in an efficient and accountable manner, to meet program and management objectives.

Personnel:

To provide support and systems which allow employees to maximize productivity, potential and satisfaction, while meeting program and management objectives.

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1.3 DELIVERY & MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The principles describe how the Parks Division will achieve its objectives.

The **delivery** principles describe how we will provide services to our clients. They are drawn primarily from two sources: (1) the Recreation and Parks Policy and (2) Ministerial and Governmental Direction. All delivery principles must be considered when project guidelines are established. Project managers may exclude principles where a rationale for exclusion is provided.

The **management** principles will guide how we manage, supervise and work within the Division. They apply at all times and will become evaluation standards in employee appraisals.

The management principles are, in part, a restatement and renewed commitment to the departmental principles that were published earlier as the Corporate Vision. In addition, the management principles reflect directions from the Minister regarding emphasis on our public image and effective program monitoring and evaluation.

Delivery Principles

All of these principles must be considered when project guidelines are established

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Delivery Principles

1. Systems Framework and Classification:

A systems framework will be developed to guide the selection, dedication, development and management of the Parks System to ensure outdoor recreation and resource protection objectives are achieved. The system will include lands and resources representative of the province's natural landscapes. A systems plan and classification framework will provide criteria and priorities for allocating resources associated with program delivery.

2. Protection and Management of Heritage and Outdoor Recreation Resources:

The Division will emphasize protection of provincially significant heritage resources through identification, designation and management of key resources, features and lands. The Division will pursue coordinated and integrated planning and delivery of interagency conservation and outdoor recreation programs.

3. Tourism and Heritage Resource Development:

In delivering Divisional programs, greater emphasis will be placed on the selection of tourism destination facilities, services and opportunities. Tourism promotion of natural attractions, recreation opportunities, and services will be pursued.

4. Client Oriented Services:

The Division will develop programs and services in direct response to market demand and client needs. Users of the Parks System and other interested groups will have opportunities to review and provide input on Division programs and services.

5. Emphasis on Self-Serve:

In keeping with the overall government commitment to reduce operating costs, there will be an emphasis on developing self-serve oriented facilities and opportunities. Greater emphasis will be placed on incorporating this philosophy into capital development and operating systems.

Delivery Principles

6. User Pay:

As demand upon services increases in proportion to the availability of public funds, the Division will institute a user pay approach to cover costs. User pay will be based on the principle of equity, where programs or services responding to the general needs of the public will receive the largest subsidy. Subsidization will decrease as services become more exclusive to the user.

7. Managing and Operating Policies and Standards:

Management and operating policies will guide facility development, resource protection and operational maintenance required for sites in the Parks System. Planning, design and development standards will be used to direct replacement, upgrading and redevelopment of the physical plant in the system. Operations and maintenance standards, plus land management guidelines will establish appropriate levels of service.

8. Protection of the Physical Base:

The integrity of the existing capital investment specified in the Parks System will be maintained and replaced through capital and operating funds and resources.

9. Delivery Efficiency:

The Division will provide public services at defined standards and optimize use of existing facilities and opportunities. Cost/benefit criteria will be established and used in allocating resources. Support for local and regional economies will be emphasized.

10. Privatization:

Where appropriate, the Division will employ private sector firms and not-for-profit organizations in the provision of planning, design and construction services, plus operations and maintenance of facilities. Commercial and not-for-profit opportunities will be identified which could augment and support Division programs and services. Delivery of such services and programs by interested parties, volunteers and the commercial sector will be evaluated with due regard to economic considerations, consistency and quality of service, and where public access and safety plus land management are not at risk.

11. Use of Volunteers:

The Division will use volunteers where there is an opportunity to augment current services, where the Division could not otherwise afford expansion, and where Albertans will benefit from enjoyment and education.

Management Principles

1. Importance of the Individual
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Teamwork and Job Satisfaction
4. Commitment to Open Communication
5. Personal Development
6. Franchised Decision Making and Constructive Conflict Resolution
7. Project and Financial Control
8. Favourable Public Image
9. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

These principles will be used as evaluation standards in employee appraisals

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Management Principles

1. Importance of the Individual

Employees dedicated to Parks are the foundation of the organization. The Division will respect and recognize the contributions and accomplishments of all employees. Everyone is encouraged to practice mutual respect and trust in interacting with others and, foster enthusiasm, commitment and loyalty towards the Division.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Division will ensure clear definition of the role and results expected of each individual in relation to the objectives of the organization. Performance appraisal will be done in cooperation with the individual using a consistent evaluation method. Clear reporting lines will be established for all positions.

3. Teamwork and Job Satisfaction:

Teamwork is encouraged as a working style that results in high job satisfaction, quality and productivity. Supervisors are encouraged to support open discussions, positive suggestions and innovation within their teams, and to maintain a healthy and supportive work environment.

4. Commitment to Open Communication:

Individuals at all levels in the Division have the responsibility to provide information to others who need to know, having a concern for appropriate timing, quality, quantity and confidentiality. Open and honest dialogue is encouraged regardless of position and responsibilities. Everyone will be provided with information required for goal setting, planning, operations, monitoring and evaluating performance.

5. Personal Development:

Personal growth and the Division's growth are compatible and mutually nurturing. To ensure success and productivity, everyone will be provided with appropriate opportunities and information through inhouse training, on the job experience and formal development programs.

6. Franchised Decision Making and Constructive Conflict Resolution:

Delegation of decision making with appropriate accountability, responsibility and quality control will be pursued as close as possible to program delivery. Adequate opportunity for input, positive conflict resolution and concensus building will be the norm, recognizing the decisions rest with the leader of the decision centre. No one will have the right to veto a decision for which they have no responsibility or accountability.

7. Project and Financial Control:

Appropriate coordination and management systems will be instituted to provide timely and accurate reporting, monitoring and evaluation of program content schedules, to established financial targets and expenditures. Ongoing review and evaluation of standards, processes, procedures and systems will take place to improve and further streamline program delivery. The use of zero based budgeting will be emphasized.

8. Favourable Public Image:

The Division's first priority is to fulfill the needs of park visitors and the public. We will place continued emphasis on improving customer satisfaction and reducing "*red tape*" in dealing with the park visitor's and public inquiries.

9. Program Monitoring and Evaluation:

To ensure that outdoor recreation and conservation programs are serving the needs of Albertans, the Parks Division will regularly monitor and evaluate its products and services based on user demands and satisfaction.

SECTION 2: MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

This section describes our current status, the challenges our Division is facing, a list of priority activities that will be undertaken, and guidelines for organizational structure. The intent is to inform staff of the issues and perspectives management believes are important to the Division. In contrast to the long term foundation in Section 1, these statements will be elaborated upon in the next several months.

Section 2: Management Direction

- 2.1 The Successes of the 1980s
- 2.2 Present & Future Demands
- 2.3 Parks Vision for the 1990s
- 2.4 The Challenge
- 2.5 Public Service & Organizational Priorities
- 2.6 Organizational Guidelines

2.1 THE SUCCESSES OF THE 1980's

As we consolidate our Division and prepare for the challenges for the 1990s, we may discount the considerable success we have achieved in the 1980s. That would be a mistake. The 1980s was the decade in which the growth pattern of public and private agencies was no longer predictable. It was a decade when external forces and the demands of society became significantly more complex. It was a decade in which the information needed to do ones job was significantly increased. Through all of this change, people who work in our Division have grown to meet the challenge. There is not a single individual who has not learned new skills, developed new ways of doing things and coped with unpredictable change. Alberta Parks has remained in the forefront, and therefore we will enter the 1990s strong and prepared.

Our successes during the 1980s include:

- **Maintaining high client satisfaction:** a reputation for quality and competence. We are the quality leader in our field in this province.
- **Meeting the outdoor recreation demands of Albertans:** responding to a period of high growth and rapidly changing needs.
- **Good management and financial control**: an enviable reputation in government.
- **Being innovative:** by implementing the concepts of project management, environmental education, visitor reservations, standards, and planning, design and operation standards, for example.
- **Being flexible**: when asked to change our capital development process, our maintainence delivery, our visitor registration methods, or our statistical recording, we did so progressively and successfully.

The high calibre of skill and dedication of our employees in the past seven years is the basis of our confidence to move forward to new challenges.

2.2 PRESENT & FUTURE DEMANDS

Like most organizations today, the newly established Parks Division is faced with the challenge of providing relevant public services and programs, while managing limited resources in the most effective and efficient manner. Such a challenge requires us to **evaluate both "what" we do and "how" we do it.**

Fortunately, the Department foresaw this change in conditions and initiated preparation of the Recreation and Parks Policy in 1985 in order to provide clear direction to carry us through these times of economic and social changes.
As part of the policy preparation, the Department undertook a major review of its programs. This review provided the Parks Division the opportunity to assess the demands that influence us most.

Public Expectations:

Public input received by the department in 1984 clearly indicated that Albertans expect our department to take a greater responsibility for resource protection. There is support for us to act to conserve wildlands, natural environments, and open space. In addition, Albertans expect us to supply a diverse range of outdoor recreation experiences, and to continually evaluate programs and services.

Departmental Program Direction:

The Department has directed the Division to emphasize interagency cooperation and long range planning. We have also been directed to promote environmental awareness and understanding of the economic benefits of resource protection and outdoor recreation. It is expected that we will respond to changing public needs through public input, market research and innovation. Funding support will be diversified through partnerships with volunteers, other agencies and the commercial sector.

Government Direction:

The Alberta Government has directed that we manage and deliver programs with reduced resources, and increase private sector opportunities. Considerable support for the growth of tourism is expected through the 1990s. Also, Alberta's Parks are expected to support a desirable lifestyle, accessible to all.

2.3 PARKS VISION FOR THE 1990s

The Recreation and Parks Policy envisions the department's role in the 1990s. The Parks Division plays an important role in making that vision become a reality by providing outdoor recreation and heritage resource protection programs. The following is a vision of the Parks Division:

> We will ensure well-managed, efficiently run recreation and parks facilities, and provide Albertans with equitable opportunities and services, and focus on areas of greatest need. For heritage protection, the long term desire is to create a **comprehensive network of protected heritage sites**, dedicated to protecting significant landscapes and resource features of the province. The network will be built on a cooperative and concerted commitment across all levels of government, the private sector, non-profit organizations and individual land owners. It would rely on sound communication and sharing of expertise and information and, require integrated planning and resource management of sites and their resources.
>
> The Parks Division will lead in establishing the **provincial network of protected heritage sites**, developing exemplary conservation practices and providing nature oriented outdoor recreation, tourism, and interpretive opportunities and services on lands under the administration of the department. The system must **balance outdoor recreation and heritage resource protection**, with highly protected wilderness areas and ecological reserves coexisting with provincial parks and recreation areas providing for outdoor use and enjoyment.
>
> **Promoting and marketing** the Parks system is also part of the vision, to ensure Albertans and visitors understand and appreciate the value of our protected heritage resources and the role they play in outdoor learning, ecological research, heritage appreciation and recreation.
>
> **Conservation leadership** is considered an essential component to strengthen and complement the Division's resources, and to motivate and develop local and regional conservation organizations. Local initiatives and community involvement in outdoor recreation and conservation projects need this type of grass root support system, which the Division will be instrumental in fostering.

2.4 THE CHALLENGE

As we end this decade, we must prepare clear direction and a foundation for the 1990s. There are a number of criteria that we will use to measure our success of meeting the challenge. These criteria are outlined in the attached reference page, "The Challenge".

This list is not intended to be an exhaustive or specific set of measures. Instead it is intended to establish "the bigger picture". If we achieve the five factors stated in "the challenge", we will have been successful, and will have responded to the major issues which currently affect this Division.

The Challenge

We are successful if we:

I mprove the Parks Division image both to the public and to employees

I mplement new management approaches in response to a changing environment and a need to maximize services while reducing budget support.

R espond to the priorities in the Recreation and Parks Policy Statement.

D evelop more responsive financial management along with more efficient administrative and delivery systems.

R ealign workloads and resources to more effectively deliver our products and services.

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2.5 PUBLIC SERVICE & ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

We have confirmed our mission and our objectives and it is clear that the Division is doing "the right things". This means that the fundamental programs and services which we provide to the public and visitors to the Parks System will not change significantly.

The Division will continue to provide a variety of recreational opportunities, including water and land based day use, overnight camping, and hiking. We will provide a variety of services to promote public appreciation and appropriate use of the Parks System and natural resources.

There is strong public support for us to strengthen our resource protection responsibilities and establish a network of protected heritage sites across the province. We will demonstrate exemplary conservation and management practices within our Parks System.

There is a need to integrate and coordinate planning and delivery of outdoor recreation and conservation programs across all levels of government, and with the private sector. This will require all parties to share resources, information and expertise.

Tourism has become a major contributor to the Alberta economy, and it is recognized that our Parks have a major role to play. Increasingly, we will emphasize the development of tourism destination and support facilities. We recognize that the protection of natural landscapes is a major factor in the success of the province's tourism industry.

With the merger of the two former divisions, a number of systems and processes need to be revised or refined to address overlap, duplication, and integration; and to clarify decision making and accountability. The conversion of the Divisional priorities into action is accomplished through the management planning system. In this respect Divisional management planning is directed on an annual basis by the Departmental "Planning Memorandum".

However, it should be noted that our primary mission of delivering programs/services to the public must not be comprimised at any time. With that in mind, the Divisional priorities are now introduced on the following pages.

Outdoor Recreation Priorities

- Define outdoor recreation services and facilities which the Division should supply.
- Implement the classification system and rationalize the Department's land units.
- Update planning, capital and operational delivery processes and standards for the system.
- Develop and implement a marketing strategy.
- Coordinate planning and delivery of outdoor recreation facilities, services and opportunities with other agencies.
- Consolidate and enhance the Division's market research program to be more client based and responsive to user demand.

Resource Protection Priorities

- Develop a comprehensive policy for conservation and management of heritage resources in the Parks System.
- Implement a systems planning framework to identify and priorize sites and resources needing management and protection.
- Develop a resource management strategy for departmental lands which will identify priorities for acquisition and resource management.
- Integrate resource management planning into capital and operational programming and delivery.
- Exhibit visible action in the area of resource protection and increase public understanding and support of resource management activities.
- Promote and support research to improve monitoring and management of protected ecosystems.
- Implement a conservation leadership strategy to strengthen conservation organizations and support local and regional initiatives in conservation.

Interagency Coordination Priorities

- Develop comprehensive program direction for Interagency Coordination.
- Evaluate and prioritize program areas where the Division should be actively coordinating with other agencies.
- Develop and implement formal coordination mechanisms to address programming, planning, communications, facility and service development and operations, plus joint heritage resource protection and land management strategies.
- Establish formal roles and responsibilities for interagency coordination at all levels in the Division.
- Participate in coordinated tourism programs that involve several agencies. Through cooperation with government communities and private agencies our Division will be a leading contributor to the growth of the tourism industry.

Management Priorities

- Define and clarify management philosophy, principles and priorities, including processes and systems for goal and priority setting, management and work planning, program monitoring and evaluation.
- Establish formal roles and responsibilities for branches.
- Update program delivery systems, processes and standards.
- Develop and implement formal management information systems.
- Establish administrative support services to assist management and program delivery.
- Consolidate the Division's policy and procedures development process.

Financial Priorities

- Establish consistent financial planning and budgeting systems for the Division.
- Develop a project monitoring and financial expenditure recording system.
- Institute a revenue collection and recording process for the Division.

Personnel Priorities

- Clarify roles, responsibilities and skill requirements for all Divisional positions.
- Update all position descriptions.
- Identify training needs and requirements.
- Develop and implement training and development activities to address training needs.
- Implement an annual Divisional and branch management planning process as a basis for employee and management performance.
- Maintain a Divisional occupational health and safety plan, and evaluation system.

2.6 ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES

As the Parks Division moves into the 1990's, it must have the flexibility to deal with change and a structure which will allow a range of methods in delivering its products and services. It must also be capable of managing its limited resources to achieve optimum provision of public services, while streamlining and reducing overhead.

A number of guidelines have been established to direct the structure of our Division. These are summarized below:

1. **Division Of Labor:** Employees in **Edmonton** will formulate policy and strategic direction for the Division. Long range program direction, financial and manpower planning, and management support systems fall within this responsibility. Headquarters functions will be reviewed and consolidated where necessary, to ensure integration and to clarify roles.

Employees in **regions** will coordinate and manage program delivery, ensuring consistent application of delivery, financial, administrative and management standards and systems. They will provide field employees with management, professional and technical expertise and support where required.

Employees in the **field** will deliver public programs and services according to specified standards, systems and procedures. Emphasis will be placed on developing teams that can also provide input into planning, capital projects and Divisional policy development.

Special support functions will be provided at appropriate locations based on need. Functions that are critical to the Division's management information systems, will be consolidated as required.

2. **Administration:** Administration will provide support to units and will strive to reduce as many steps in the paper trail as possible. The Division will evaluate the efficiencies of centralization against the effectiveness of decentralized services and support. Managers should have the closest possible line of contact with centralized services, given it does not jeopardize the availability of essential management information for decision making.

3. **Capital Delivery:** Capital delivery will remain centralized as an Edmonton function so that program requirements remain integrated with policy planning. Consideration will be given to decentralizing some aspects of capital delivery, once appropriate financial and project control systems are implemented. Significant attention will be given to integrating facility repair activities within the Division, in order to optimize available resources required to replace and repair our physical plant.

4. **Planning:** Strategic planning will remain a centralized function related to systems, programs and budgeting. Operational planning will be done by all managers and supervisors for their jurisdiction.

5. **Privatization:** The Division will carefully review functions and services which can be privatized against the following requirements: cost savings, control and consistency of delivery, and government direction. Functions which are privatized will be pursued on a systems wide basis.

6. **Volunteers:** The Division will actively pursue the involvement of volunteers where public service delivery can be enhanced. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing the visitor services program using this strategy. Use of the private sector to train and develop volunteers should be considered.